

**Lee doesn't have confidence of rakyat**  
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I refer to the Malaysiakini  
MCPX  
report Lee quits Gerakan, rebuts criticisms.

Former Gerakan deputy secretary-general Lee Kah Choon's decision to accept the posts of director of Penang Development Corporation(PDC) and chairman of the executive committee of Invest-Penang has been the in the headlines over the last few days.

His appointment has created much debate and controversy that has finally forced him to resign from Gerakan, the party on whose platform he almost became the chief minister of Penang. Walking out of his party, of which he was a senior member, in favour of the posts offered by the opposition government, speaks volumes of his loyalty and credibility.

Penang Chief Minister and DAP Secretary-General Lim Guan Eng, defended his appointment of Lee, describing him as the right man for the job. However not many, including his predecessor, Dr Koh Tsu Koon, agree with him on that.

The Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says Lee's acceptance of the posts by the Pakatan Rakyat government is against the BN spirit and he rightly lamented that Lee accepted the posts without conferring with his party's leadership.

Political opponents cooperating to work together is good and should be encouraged as it augurs well for our democratic system. Political parties may differ in their ideologies but united in their ideals – working for the rakyat. They can differ in the ways they choose to serve the people but should not differ on whether or not to serve them.

It is time to discard the politics of hate that we were so accustomed to all these years and enter into an era of cooperation between the BN and Pakatan Pakyat at the state and federal levels. Instead of expending their energy and resources to run down and destabilise each other, it would be better for them to pool their resources to improve their services to the rakyat.

The opposition has an equally important role to provide the check and balance to the ruling party. Patriotism is not the sole property of the ruling party. Members of the opposition parties are equally, if not more, patriotic to the nation as those from the ruling party.

While encouraging closer cooperation between the ruling and opposition parties, care must be taken in picking the leaders for the various portfolios. The selection should be purely based on merit, not on race, creed or political beliefs.

However, they should not only be capable but also have the support of the people. In this regard, it is hard to justify the reasons for picking Lee after his defeat in the recent elections. I am sure there are many among the elected opponents who are not only capable but at the same time have the undivided support of their constituents.

Lim should be commended for being courageous to break from tradition to recruit members from the BN to serve in his government-controlled institutions. However, it would be wrong

to appoint to any high position someone who has been rejected by the people.

It may be part of a political game but whatever the reason may be, the people's will should always override all other considerations, otherwise the new government will not be any different from the old.

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